

December 12, 2007

RE: Christine Laye v. Department of Corrections (DOC)
Allocation Review No.ALLO-07-035

Dear Ms. Laye:

The Director's review of DOC's allocation determination of your position has been completed. The review was based on the written documentation submitted by you and by DOC. DOC determined that your Supply Control Technician position was properly allocated and denied your request for reallocation to the Warehouse Operator 4 classification. You asked for a Director's review of DOC's determination.

Background

On April 18, 2006, you completed a Position Review Request form. However, there is no indication on the documents you provided that your supervisor signed this form or that it was submitted to DOC's Human Resources office. Also, this form does not indicate to which classification you were requesting your position be allocated.

On November 16, 2006, you signed a Position Description form that indicates you were requesting reallocation of your position to the Warehouse Operator 4 classification. Your supervisor also signed the form on November 16th and your Department Head signed it on December 4, 2006. DOC indicated that the Human Resources office received your request on December 6, 2006. June Richards, Human Resource Consultant for DOC, reviewed your position and determined that it was properly allocated to the Supply Control Technician classification. You were informed of this determination by letter dated April 2, 2007. By letter dated April 24, 2007, you requested a Director's review of DOC's determination. In your April 24th letter, you asked for consideration of lower classifications in the Warehouse Operator series, such as the Warehouse Operator 3 level.

By letter dated October 26, 2007, Karen Wilcox, the Director's Review Coordinator, informed the parties that the review of your position would be conducted based on the documents provided by the parties. Ms. Wilcox set an exhibit deadline of December 3, 2007 for submission of additional documentation. On November 30, 2007, DOC submitted an Allocation Written Review summary and on December 3, 2007, you filed a response to the written review summary.

Summary of Ms. Laye's Perspective

In your April 24, 2007 letter, you assert that DOC failed to review your April 2006 request and instead, in June 2006, DOC asked your supervisor to update your position description. You assert that changes were made to the position review request form and it was resubmitted during June 2006. Then in October 2006, your supervisor completed updating your position description. You contend that your supervisor was later informed by Human Resources that the position review request form had been lost and that Human Resources had no record of it. You contend that you resubmitted your copy of the April 2006 position review request form to June Richards. By letter dated April 2, 2007, Ms. Richards denied your request. In your letter you express your concern that Ms. Richards' decision was based on your April 2006 position review request and not on the updated position description provided by your supervisor after June 2006. You also express your concern that neither you nor your supervisor was contacted to clarify the duties of your position.

In regard to your duties and responsibilities, you argue that you are the only staff person in the Mission Creek Correctional Center for Women (Mission Creek) warehouse. You assert that the Mission Creek warehouse encompasses 4,000 square feet, maintains a perpetual inventory and is the central receiving location for the institution. You contend that you perform all of the duties of the Warehouse Operator including overseeing, directing and supervising all receiving and storage operations in the warehouse. You argue that you are responsible for stocking the warehouse, receiving goods, managing space, distributing all supplies for the facility, providing expertise on ordering and purchasing issues, managing the offender store, and designing and maintaining all recordkeeping systems in the warehouse.

You indicate that Mission Creek has limited staffing and argue that you should not be allocated to a lower classification than other warehouse operators simply because you perform all the work yourself. You also argue that you are unaware of any warehouse in the state that is being operated by a Supply Control Technician. You ask that your position be reallocated to the Warehouse Operator 4 classification or to a lower classification within that series.

Summary of DOC's reasoning

DOC argues that its determination was based on your April 2006 Position Review Request, the position description received by HR in approximately December 2006, the results of a desk audit conducted in February 2007 and a review of classification specifications.

DOC asserts that Mission Creek is a small facility with approximately 52 staff and just over 100 inmates. DOC describes the warehouse as a room in the main institution building, not a separate warehouse facility as described by the class series concept of the Warehouse Operator series. DOC asserts that the area in which you work is better described as a storeroom rather than a warehouse. DOC suggests that your position description indicates that you work in an office environment which further supports their contention that your work is performed in a storeroom. DOC acknowledges that you direct the work of offenders but asserts that you are the only staff member assigned to your area and as such, you do not lead other staff members as required by the Warehouse Operator 3 classification. DOC argues that the duties and responsibilities of your position are best characterized by the Supply Control Technician classification.

Director's Determination

As the Director's designee, I carefully reviewed all of the documentation in the file including your letter requesting a review of DOC's determination and your attachments to the letter. I compared the duties and responsibilities described in your Position Review Request and in the October 2006 Position Description for your position to the relevant classification specifications. I specifically reviewed the Warehouse Operator 2, 3 and 4 classifications and the Supply Control Technician classification. Based on my review of the documents, the available classifications, and my analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude that your position should be reallocated to the Warehouse Operator 2 classification.

Rationale for Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

You argue that you should not be allocated to lower classification than other warehouse operators simply because of the size of Mission Creek and because you perform all of the warehouse work yourself. You also argue that no other warehouses in the state are operated by a Supply Control Technician. While a comparison of one position to another similar position may be useful in gaining a better understanding of the duties performed by and the level of responsibility assigned to an incumbent, allocation of a position must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to an individual position compared to the existing classifications. The allocation or misallocation of a similar position is not a determining factor in the appropriate allocation of a position. Flahaut v. Dept's of Personnel and Labor and Industries, PAB No. ALLO 96-0009 (1996).

You work independently in an isolated area of the main building. Your position description states that your position is a lead position and that you supervise, train and monitor offender warehouse clerks. In order to be allocated to a supervisory classification you must perform the duties of a supervisor. The Glossary of classification terms found in the Department of Personnel Classification and Pay Administrative Guide defines a supervisor as:

An employee assigned responsibility by management to participate in all of the following functions with respect to their subordinate employees: (1) selection of staff, (2) training and development, (3) planning and assignment of work, (4) evaluating performance, (5) adjusting grievances, and (6) taking corrective action. Participation in these functions must not be of a merely routine nature but requires the exercise of individual judgment.

Although you provide work guidance and oversee the work of offenders, you do not have supervisory responsibility as defined above.

The Glossary of classification terms defines a lead as: “[a]n employee who performs the same or similar duties as other employees in his/her work group and has the designated responsibility to regularly assign, instruct, and check the work of those employees.” In addition, the Glossary of classification terms provides that an employee who directs the work of others, “[p]rovide[s] work guidance or direction but is **NOT** a “lead”; does **NOT** have the responsibility of assigning, instructing and checking the work of others on a regular and ongoing basis.” Based on the information provided in your position description, your oversight of offenders is best described as directing their work. You may lead offenders on occasion, but you provided no information to show that this is a regular and ongoing responsibility of your position. To the contrary, in your letter of appeal, you indicate that you are the “only staff in the warehouse” and that you oversee and direct all activities in the warehouse.

In summary, your position is responsible for the following:

55% Maintaining warehouse inventory, conducting regular inventories and determining stock levels, maintaining electronic inventory records, receiving all goods for the facility, accepting and filling Supply Inventory Transaction Requests and distributing goods accordingly.

35% Coordinating and distributing inmate orders, developing and implementing the inmate clothing issue and reissue process, and overseeing and directing the work of inmate clerks.

10% Maintaining fixed asset inventory, receiving and tagging new equipment, coordinating annual physical inventory, delivering daily bank deposits and acting as back up for payroll distribution.

The definition for the Supply Control Technician classification states: “[p]erforms the full range of technical duties under the supervision of the individual responsible for the purchasing of supplies, materials and equipment for an agency, institution, major subdivision, or major operating location of agency. Supervises and/or participates in purchasing control, maintaining inventory levels, contract and invoice billing, and correspondence work connected with tracing and expediting orders.”

The distinguishing characteristics for the Supply Control Technician classification state: “[p]ositions at this level support an individual responsible for the purchasing of supplies, materials, and equipment for an agency, institution, major subdivision, or major operating location of an agency, by handling the purely technical aspects of purchasing and inventory control.”

Your duties include some technical aspects of inventory control and purchasing. But your overall duties and work activities go beyond the technical aspects. You are also responsible for receiving and distributing goods. You indicate that you oversee and direct all receiving and storage operations in the warehouse, that you are responsible for stocking the warehouse, receiving goods, managing space, distributing all supplies for the facility, and managing the offender store. These duties and responsibilities do not fit within the Supply Control Technician classification.

The class series concept for the Warehouse Operator classifications states: “[p]ositions in this class series either supervise or perform warehouse functions in a central warehouse or a major area within a large warehouse. These positions are located in separate buildings devoted to receiving, storing and shipping supplies, equipment, furnishings or provisions.”

Your position is not located in a separate building. Rather, your work is located in the basement of the main administration building of Mission Creek where you are responsible for the central receiving and storage operations for the facility. You provided no information to show that you are responsible for central shipping operations. However, DOC provided the November 2, 2002 position questionnaire for your position to show that your position has not changed. This position questionnaire indicates that your position is responsible for inmates who ship returned packages and that you handle proper disposition of state equipment. Therefore, you are responsible for some limited shipping operations. Although you are not located in a separate building, your position fits within the class series concept on a best fit basis because you are responsible for warehouse functions in a central warehouse devoted to receiving, storing and shipping supplies, equipment, furnishings or provisions.

The definition for the Warehouse Operator 4 classification states: “[t]his is the supervisory or expert level of the series. Positions at this level supervise and direct the entire receiving, storage and shipping operation in a major distribution center or on a multi-shift operation serving multiple delivery points, the complete operation of a commissary, warehouse, or a major subdivision of a large volume fast turnover warehouse.”

Your position does not fit within the Warehouse Operator 4 classification. You are not a supervisor. Furthermore, the warehouse operations at Mission Creek do not meet the size or scope of a major distribution center, a multi-shift operation serving multiple delivery points, or the complete operation of a commissary, warehouse, or a major subdivision of a large volume fast turnover warehouse as encompassed at the 4 level.

The definition for the Warehouse Operator 3 classification states: “[t]his is the senior level of the series. Positions lead staff and participate in the work of procuring, receiving, storing, inventory control, or shipping operations in a commissary or warehouse, or electronic/communications stockroom, or a combination of these activities. Some positions manage the retail store and/or food counter at a large institution.” (Emphasis added).

Your position does not fit within the Warehouse Operator 3 classification. While you oversee and direct the work of offenders, you do not lead staff as required for allocation to the 3 level.

The definition for the Warehouse Operator 2 classification states: “[t]his is the journey level of the series. Performs warehouse functions in a major area within a large warehouse or independently operates a small or decentralized warehouse; receives, records, stores, issues, and ships stock and supplies; and disposes of surplus property.”

Your position fits within the definition of the Warehouse Operator 2 level. You perform warehouse functions in a small warehouse and receive, record, store, issue, and ship supplies, and dispose of state equipment.

While not allocating criteria, your duties and responsibilities are described by the typical work statements for the Warehouse Operator 2 classification. For example, your position:

- Supervises or participates in the procuring and receiving of various types of materials, equipment or electronics/communications components and equipment;

- Conducts ongoing property inventory control maintenance; responsible for accurate maintenance of accounting records that identify inventory on hand in addition to that being shipped and received;

- Supervises or participates in unpacking incoming items and checking their condition, quantity, and type, against shipping documents; makes stock identification tags; coding acquisition and handling charges shown on receiving documents;

- Plans work of offenders and instructs them in warehousing duties;

- Conducts physical inventories; prepares and maintains perpetual inventory, records, and correspondence files; keeps other records as required;

- Maintains warehouse arrangement and maximizes space utilization to accommodate current stock; and

- Oversees disposal of surplus or excess property.

In Salsberry v. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-06-013 (2007), the Personnel Resources Board addressed the concept of best fit. The Board referenced Allegrì v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. ALLO-96-0026 (1998), in which the Personnel Appeals Board noted that while the appellant's duties and responsibilities did not encompass the full breadth of the duties and responsibilities described by the classification to which his position was allocated, on a best fit basis, the classification best described the level, scope and diversity of the overall duties and responsibilities of his position.

Overall, the level and scope of your duties and responsibilities best fit the within the Warehouse Operator 2 classification. Your position should be reallocated.

Appeal Rights

If this position is covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement, please refer to the contract to determine whether the parties have appeal rights to the Personnel Resources Board.

If this position is not represented, WAC 357-49-018 provides that either party may appeal the results of the Director's review to the Personnel Resources Board by filing written exceptions to the Director's determination in accordance with Chapter 357-52 WAC. An appeal must be received in writing at the office of the Board within thirty (30) calendar days after service of the Director's determination. The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Sincerely,

Holly Platz, SPHR
Director's Review Investigator

cc: Kathy Tarli, DOC
June Richards, DOC
Lisa Skriletz, DOP